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The CIA on Campus

By Sandy Baksys

The following is a test of your intelligence quotient on the subject of secret intelligence activities at Northwestern.

For the next four paragraphs all of your preconceptions about your right to privacy at NU—or anywhere else—may be called into question.

This is only a test.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, April 11, about 80 NU undergraduates gathered in front of the Technological Institute to march in protest of the university's stockholdings in South Africa.

The mood was serious but relaxed until the marchers noticed a middle-aged man with an eerie sense of concentration—and a close-up lense—photographing their faces.

Daily Northwestern photographer David Lefkowitz asked the man to identify himself and his employer as is common practice between two photographers covering the same event.

THE STRANGER REPEATEDLY refused to disclose either his name or his intentions and continued taking pictures. He followed the marchers until they dispersed, then left.

Q. Who was this man of a thousand shutter clicks?

A. 1. An obnoxious camera bug. 2. An FBI agent. 3. A CIA agent.

Correct answer: any, all or none of the above.

It may be hard to believe that the mysterious photographer was working for an intelligence agency. And, considering his indiscretion, it's not likely that he was.

But in light of recent discoveries about past spying by the CIA, you can never be quite sure.

Since President Ford outlawed CIA domestic surveillance in 1976, only the FBI is legally allowed to spy on campus politics.

CIA spokesman Dale Peterson Monday said the agency no longer spies on American college students. But he acknowledged that CIA informants took pictures and copied license plate numbers of participants in campus political meetings throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.

DOCUMENTS RELEASED in 1977 under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) appear to show that such spying took place at NU.

In two 1968 CIA reports released to Midweek by the Washington-based Campaign for Political Rights, several NU meetings in 1969 were targeted for surveillance.

The first listing was a January, 1969 "New Left" symposium featuring speakers Tom Hayden, Jesse Jackson, and Dick Gregory. "A large number of New Lefters from many areas are expected to be in attendance," the entry reads.

Another NU event listed for surveillance was a Jan. 9, 1969 demonstration against CIA recruiting on campus by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

The CIA refused to confirm or deny whether it had spied on students at the two NU events.

BUT THE INCLUSION of any happening in the agency's calendar virtually insures that informants were present to take pictures and record names, said Susan Woods, national campus coordinator of the Campaign for Political Rights.

CIA political spying on American campuses—code-named "Project Resistance"—was aimed at practically any group perceived to be anti-establishment, from the Black Panthers to the Quakers.

But Project Resistance was only the most visible CIA assault on the ivory tower.

The Senate Intelligence Committee reported in 1976 that the CIA was using hundreds of scholars at more than 100 American institutions of higher education in a variety of undercover intelligence projects.

Such operations included mind-control research conducted in the '60s and covertly sponsored research programs that were tailored to meet American foreign policy objectives in the Third World.

Top NU administrators questioned this month said they had no knowledge of any "official" CIA research done at NU in the past or present.

"I'VE NEVER HAD reason to suspect that the original source of funds (for any program) was the CIA," said President Robert H. Strotz. "There could have been things going on (before I became president in 1970) I never knew about," he ad-

Vice President for Research and Dean of Science David Mintzer said he was aware of all research officially contracted by the university over the last six years and was unaware of any official CIA activities at NU.

But professors often participate in covert CIA programs without their knowledge, said Janet Abu-Lughod, professor of sociology and urban affairs.

"The CIA doesn't walk around with a big sign that says 'CIA' like in a Woody Allen movie," she said. "Many times an innocent-looking program being funded by an agency that looks clean will have been initiated by the CIA."

Indeed, recent press investigations have produced a list of foundations that have served as fronts in CIA-sponsored research contracts. Included on the list were the Andreas Foundation of Minneapolis and the Granary Fund of Boston.

Strotz said he knows of no university effort to find out if NU has received any funds from these foundations.

MINTZER SAID HE has never checked the list of university contracts for contributions from known CIA conduits because "if they really want to infiltrate a project, there's no way we could find out about it anyway."

The CIA could make secret arrangements with any foundation sponsoring research at NU, Mintzer said.

While much CIA undercover work in academia flows through administrative channels, some programs have depended solely on liaisons with faculty.

The most widely-known of these is the "debriefing" of faculty members who travel abroad.

In August, 1970, the CIA sent Strotz a letter requesting routine notification of all foreign travel by NU faculty and staff as part of a general effort to increase "coverage" of Americans living or traveling abroad.

STROTZ REJECTED THE request as an invasion of privacy. But the letter is solid evidence of the CIA's desire to use traveling scholars as intelligence sources.

During the past 20 years, several NU faculty, including history Prof. David Joravsky and physics and astronomy department chairman Chia-Wei Woo, have been approached after foreign tours for debriefing by intelligence agents.

"They asked me, what do you think about the state of Chinese physics," Woo said. Because most of the questions he was asked after touring China in 1976 and 1977 dealt with science, Woo said he had no qualms about answering them.

A CIA man asked Joravsky what he knew about Soviet dissidents after the professor returned from a trip to Europe in 1974.

"Anything I'd say about them, I'd say in print," Joravsky told the agent.

Even President Strotz was once debriefed after a trip he made to Russia as an economics professor. Strotz said the debriefing was cut short because he couldn't answer any of the CIA's questions, but that he believes professors should decide for themselves whether or not to cooperate with the CIA.

THE AGENCY PERMITTED history Asst. Prof. Robert D. Givens no such choice when he was unwittingly "debriefed" through an illegal CIA letter-opening campaign.

The CIA opened, read and copied some 215,000 first-class letters mailed by or addressed to American citizens and residents from 1953 to 1973 under an operation code-named HTLINGUAL.

Suspecting that he might have been a victim of letter surveillance during a visit to Russia, Givens sent a query to the CIA under provisions of the federal Privacy Act of 1974.

The agency subsequently mailed Givens photocopies of six letters it said it "might have intercepted" during his 1969-70 stay in the Soviet Union.

"I guess the CIA thought it was getting some cheap intelligence," Givens said. "All they got were some letters to my friends."

Current CIA activities on campuses embrace not only faculty and staff, but students as well.

THE CIA OPENLY recruits American students at about 150 American colleges and universities, including NU, according to CIA Midwest recruiter Charles J. Minich.

Minich conducts open interviews at NU's Placement Center about twice a year, but he would not reveal the number of students hired over the years or the types of jobs they entered.

Five NU students were interviewed by Minich on his most recent visit here last fall, said Victoria Mackenroth, Placement Center administrative assistant.

The CIA also engages in covert recruitment of foreign students at an unrevealed but substantial number of institutions, according to a Senate Intelligence Committee report and the CIA's own admission.

The existence of any covert recruitment of foreign students at NU was strongly denied by university officials.

NU presently enrolls 58 undergraduates and 609 graduate students who are foreign nationals, according to Ruth Lewis, assistant director of the International Programs and Scholars Office. No student has ever complained to administrators of the program about professors acting as covert recruiters for the CIA, she said.

MAYBE THERE COULD be (some recruitment)," Lewis said, "but no one has ever mentioned it. The whole thing has just never come up."

Most professors acknowledge the CIA's legitimate need for the "good counsel of the best scholars" in the job of gathering and analyzing intelligence about other countries.

The key question that remains, then, is whether the CIA should conduct its campus operations under the cloak of secrecy.

The Senate Intelligence Committee argued that scholarly expertise "can and should be openly sought and openly given."

Meanwhile, CIA officials continue to insist that the agency has an executive mandate to conduct clandestine operations on campuses to obtain foreign intelligence information.

Both public and private investigations have turned up violations of human rights in numerous covert operations both on campus and off. In an agency where elaborate schemes ~~and sinister plots~~ abound, charges of official impropriety cling to code-names like dandelions cling to a lawn.

THE ONLY REMEDY, according to some critics, is greater openness in the intelligence community, perhaps even to the point of putting the old cloak and dagger in mothballs.

Campus informants should identify themselves when they take photographs and tell students how the pictures will be used, Woods said.

It is unethical for professors to pass confidential information about foreign students to the CIA without the students' consent, said Franklyn Haiman, NU professor of communications studies and national secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union.

CIA chief Stansfield Turner has defended his agency's use of covert faculty recruiters by saying it is as legitimate as the recruiting methods used by private firms.

But some NU professors disagreed. "They're asking professors to provide information about a student without his consent and they're asking students to work against their own governments," said Philip Schrodtt, associate professor of political science.

THE CIA ALSO takes advantage of foreign students by singling out those who need money or favors from the U.S. government to continue their studies, critics charge.

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"We're not saying everything in intelligence is pleasant," countered CIA spokesman Peterson. "Our agency is responsible for finding people we might be using for operational roles abroad."

Peterson defended covert recruitment by giving assurances that only foreign students are being investigated without their knowledge.

However, American Association of University Professors' guidelines preclude a professor's abuse of any privileged relationship between teacher and student.

"The fact that students are foreign does not change the teacher's obligation in a teacher-student relationship," said Haiman. "Just because a student is not a citizen does not mean he is not entitled to certain rights."

CIA CRITICS CHARGE that research conducted in isolation from opposing ideologies and responsible criticism can only be of questionable value to officials engaged in crucial decision-making on matters of national security.

In addition, they say, the CIA's use of scholars as international operatives, if only through the debriefing process, compromises professional integrity and arouses suspicion among possible foreign sources.

A bill to reorganize and reform the CIA is currently pending in the Senate. The Senate Intelligence Committee has so far rejected proposals to ban the CIA from campuses entirely.

Instead, the committee has urged individual institutions to hammer out their own guidelines for faculty involvement in CIA covert projects.

Twenty colleges and universities are now considering restrictions on covert CIA-faculty activities, and at least four institutions have already established guidelines, Woods said.

STROTZ SAID HE believes such regulations would be an unnecessary intrusion on the faculty's right to privacy.

Faculty conduct in regards to the CIA should be regulated through established channels, such as the General Faculty Committee, he said.

GFC chairman Arthur Veis said last week the issue of faculty-CIA relations has never once been raised during his seven years on the Committee.

"I think it's presumptuous to assume people here are involved in secret CIA activities," Veis said.

"I'm sure that somewhere along the line we've had some professors who've sinned," Strotz said. "But the important thing is that the university as an institution has maintained certain standards."

WHILE 80 OTHER institutions have asked for documents from the CIA to explore possible covert intelligence operations on campus, NU has not, according

the CIA official, Strotz.

"If I'm going to look for a needle in a haystack, I want some assurance that the needle exists," Strotz said.

At a university the size of Northwestern, secret intelligence activity is always a possibility, Haiman said.

The university community often hesitates to investigate CIA ties without concrete evidence of improprieties. But only through investigation, Haiman said, can CIA improprieties be uncovered.

Sandy Baksys, 22, is a Medill senior from Springfield, Ill. She has interned at the Detroit Free Press and The Macon (Ga.) News.

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